

## THE REMINISCENCES OF CARL SCHURZ

The reports constantly arriving from the South—reports the truthfulness of some of which was above doubt—answered these questions in the affirmative; and then nothing could be more natural than that many sober-minded citizens, unbiased by any heated partisanship, but sincerely anxious for the future of their country, should have become accessible to the belief that it was wrong and bad policy to let all, or nearly all, the voting in the South be done by men who had been engaged in the rebellion yesterday and who, although they had taken an oath of allegiance, were opposed to the new order of things to-day; and to exclude from the right of voting a great mass of people who, whatever else might be said of them, would at least loyally stand up for the legitimate results of the war. This reasoning, not any impulse of vindictiveness, not any desire to punish or humiliate the white people of the South, was the source from which sprang the resolve to introduce general negro suffrage in\* the South. This, not a motive of malice, explains also why many well-meaning people, who would rather not have negro suffrage in their own States, favored it for the States lately in rebellion.

Neither was the fact overlooked that the great mass of the Southern negroes were grossly ignorant and in other respects ill-fitted for the exercise of political privileges. Many who then favored negro suffrage would have greatly preferred its

gradual introduction, first limiting it, as Mr. Lincoln suggested to Governor Hahn of Louisiana, to those who had served as soldiers in the Union army and those who were best fitted for it by intelligence and education. But this would have reduced the negro vote to so small a figure as to render it insufficient to counteract or neutralize the power of the reactionary element. To this end the *whole* vote was required, and for that reason it <sup>TOW^</sup> <sup>^</sup>landed,;m spite of the imperfections it was